

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 are pending in the present application.

The Examiner has required election in the present application between:

Group I., claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11, drawn to image encoding, classified in class 382, subclass 173; and

Group II., claims 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12 drawn to image segmentation, classified in class 382, subclass 173.

**For the purpose of examination of the present application, Applicants elect, with traverse, Group I, Claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11.**

It is respectfully submitted that the Restriction Requirement is improper in view of the fact that no serious burden is presented to the Examiner to consider all of the claims in a single application.

As set forth in § 803 of the MPEP, the Examiner must examine an application on the merits if the examination of the entire application can be made without serious burden. Two criteria are identified for proper requirement for restriction:

The inventions must be independent or distinct as claimed; and

There must be a serious burden on the Examiner if the restriction is not required.

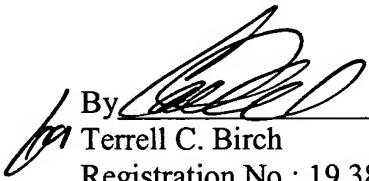

Applicants respectfully submit that a serious burden has not been placed on the Examiner to consider all of the claims in a single application.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Catherine M. Voisinet, Registration No 52,327 at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: July 24, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By   # 52,327  
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